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TV REVIEW

'The Teen-Age Smoker'

By Jack Iams

"CBS Reports" made its seasonal return to Channel 2 Wednesday night with every indication that it proposes to go its own hard-hitting, controversial way, pulling no punches and sparing no sacred cows.

The first of this fall's documentaries took a long, searching and objective look at the relation between cigarette smoking and fatal disease, particularly lung cancer. Although the title, "The Teen-Age Smoker," suggested a limited area of discussion, the program actually ranged over the entire field of cigarettes and health.

Conceivably the title, and a certain amount of emphasis on the problem of smoking by the young, was a sop to the tobacco companies who pour millions into television advertising every year. If so, it was a very small sop indeed. Because the program as a whole, though it took great pains to give both sides a fair hearing, left no doubt—at least not in the mind of this pack-a-day viewer—that the bulk of evidence points unmistakably toward a far higher mortality rate among cigarette smokers than among non-smokers, not only from lung cancer but from heart disease.

Among the telling spokesmen for this viewpoint were Dr. E. Cuyler Hammond, the American Cancer Society's director of statistical research, and Dr. Michael Shimkin, director of field studies for the National Cancer Institute of the United States Public Health Service. Even more impressive was the testimony of Sir Robert Platt, who was president of England's Royal College of Physicians when it issued its famous report of last March stating flatly that the relationship between smoking and lung cancer is unquestionable. The facts and figures put forward by these men, and several others, were plain overwhelming.

Most of the speakers who opposed them were special pleaders, such as Dr. Ernest A. Dichter, described as a consultant to tobacco companies here and abroad, and Dr. Clarence Cook Little, scientific director of the Tobacco Industry Research Committee. They took the position, in general, that statistics can be misleading and there is still much to be learned.

The most effective spokesman for the "opposition" was Dr. Harry S. N. Greene, chairman of the Department of Pathology at Yale University's School of Medicine. A down-to-earth man, who was evidently speaking his own independent mind, Dr. Greene said emphatically that he "certainly did not" believe that cigarette smoking caused lung cancer and he went on to say that those who did were "warriors against pleasure." I would dearly love to think that Dr. Greene is right.

'Misrepresentation' Charged by Allen

George V. Allen, president of the Tobacco Institute, Inc., complained Wednesday night that his participation in the program "was obtained by misrepresentation.

In a telegram to CBS president Frank Stanton, Mr. Allen said:

"We were told that the program would be an objective report on smoking and health. Instead, it affords a vehicle for venting of extreme opinions and prejudices without any real effort to explore the facts and to determine the merits of these positions."

Mr. Allen said he had not been told in advance that the "program was to be directed to the young, beginning smoker—yet this is the only subject on which I am quoted." He said the program used only a single excerpt from a lengthy interview and it was "badly out of context."

Richard S. Salant, president of CBS news, replied: "We've checked into Mr. Allen's charges and we deny them. The program speaks for itself."

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TV Time

Direct Hit At Smoking

By ARLENE GARBER
TV Editor

Whether you give up smoking or take it up, after viewing the hour inquiry, "CBS Reports: The Teen-Age Smoker," aired last night, is not the concern of television. But you can't say that you haven't been told all there is to tell about the cigarette habit.

This report did a good job of bringing to the front all the questions, all the known answers and all the answers that have yet to be found by medical researchers.

From teen-agers it discovered their lack of concern about falling victim someday to lung cancer. Also revealed was one of the major reasons why they start smoking in the first place. They want to belong, they follow the crowd and the crowd smokes.

As was intended, this program was enlightening. Especially when one expert stated that smoking in our modern age of tensions, has become a form of tranquilizer. And those who are chronic smokers should consider that they have some kind of "mild neurosis."

Some of the facts were frightening. Such as the pictures of lung tissue from smokers as compared with lung tissues from non-smokers.

This was another excellent example of informing the people, done so well last season by "CBS Reports." And from all indications the standard of this series will be maintained throughout the coming months.

A MISTAKE

"Fred Brasselle's Variety Gardens" on CBS TV was

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Smoking Show Stirs A Protest

New York, Sept. 20 (AP) — C.B.S.-TV presented both sides of the smoking-health controversy last night in an hour-long program, "The Teen-Age Smoker." It brought a protest from the head of the Tobacco Institute, Inc.

Testimony was presented by the Royal College of Physicians in Great Britain, the U. S. Public Health Service, and the American Cancer Society concerning possible links between smoking and lung cancer.

In rebuttal, Dr. Clarence Cook Little, scientific director of the Tobacco Research Center, maintained that it was not clearly established that tobacco caused cancer in man.

George V. Allen, president of the Tobacco Institute, called the program "a one-sided presentation against tobacco."

"My own participation was obtained by misrepresentation both as to purpose and content of the show," he said. "We were told that the program would be an objective report on smoking and health.

"Instead it affords a vehicle for venting of extreme opinions and prejudices, without any real effort to explore the facts and to determine the merits of these positions. The show fails to come to grips with the basic point—that the causes of lung cancer are still unknown and that every effort should be directed towards finding these causes."

Source: https://www.industrydocuments.ucsf.edu/docs/mqnk0000